

674 Correspondence

41 [Chicago] 23 February [1950]

Dear Löwith!

I was very pleased to see that your book has been reviewed so favourably. That can only help you. You will have noticed that Kuhn's criticism agrees with mine on considerable points. This cannot prevent me from thinking and telling you that I consider Kuhn to be a "clever" windbag who is not concerned about the matter and whom I do not trust.

As for Holzwege, I agree with your general judgement: Heidegger is the strongest mind alive today. I don't want to call him a philosopher – he himself no longer wants to be a philosopher – I don't know whether a true philosopher has to be a person of good will – but I do know that a bad will destroys philosophising and that Heidegger is a bad guy: the contrast between Nietzsche's noblesse and H.'s genial grumpiness is staggering. In the end, this is quite uninteresting: what really matters is the quality of his arguments. And here one must indeed say that Heidegger has irrevocably settled everything that was and is there in our century.

The problem is ultimately only whether he is right in his criticism of Plato. His dogmatic-historical rejection of any return is irrelevant: the only thing that matters is whether the subordination of the question of being [der Frage nach dem Sein] to the question of the preeminently existent [die Frage nach dem vorzüglich Seienden] is legitimate or, as H. claims, illegitimate. Most characteristic is H.'s essay on Anaximander, in which the imperishability or immortality of ἀπείρουν is not mentioned at all: there remains the absolute darkness that being and time have thrown over the existing [das Seiende] (as distinct from being) by saying: Being

[Sein], not the existent [das Seiende], exists only insofar as there is human existence [Dasein]. So is there being [das Seiende] without being [Sein]? This darkest point is further obscured in later publications.

Heidegger religious? Perhaps that is "psychologically" correct and certainly "spiritual-historically" ~ all "modern" people are religious but what he is getting at is shown by the sharp turn away from Kierkegaard to Nietzsche (which I myself like very much).

As for Weston, I can say nothing but: maybe. How much would you want? We would also have to charge you for the rather expensive journey.

Best regards

Your Leo Strauss